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ABSTRACT

State policy for higher education in Massachusetts as elsewhere renders certain courses of action attractive while placing obstacles to other courses of action by the legislature, government officials, coordinating and governing boards, and other agencies and persons engaged in or planning for higher education. Policy may take the form of legislative authorization, supported by appropriations, to establish new public institutions or programs. Policy is also made through decisions on matters such as admissions or degree requirements in public institutions. The effects of state policy are related not only to the constraints imposed and the options favored, but to the clarity of intent, the mechanism through which policy is interpreted and implemented, and the consistency of application. Following an overview, this report discusses: state educational policy ambiguities, postsecondary education needs, economic needs of society, higher education planning, planning alternatives, coordination provisions, and budgeting as an instrument of coordination. (Author/PG)

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SOME COMMENTS ON HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY IN MASSACHUSETTS

By

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Note: This paper represents an early step in a process of testing the accuracy of information and the soundness of conclusions. It will be revised on the basis of additional information and discussions. Suggestions are solicited.

POLICY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

By Francis S. Chase*

I. Overview

It is an oversimplification to speak of the Commonwealth's policy for higher education, for there is no closely integrated or well articulated body of policy. Policy is delineated, however, by Constitutional provisions, statutes of the General Court, judicial decisions, administrative procedures and regulations, budgetary allocations, the operations of the Board of Higher Education and other boards; and in more subtle ways, by tradition and time-honored convention. Some initial observations on what appear to be salient aspects of State policy are offered below:

Policy has been directed toward broadening access to higher education in the public sector, through the maintenance of low tuition charges, the establishment of community colleges with open admissions policies, and the expansion and strengthening of the University of Massachusetts.

With regard to private colleges and universities, the policy has been one of "benign neglect" (to borrow a phrase made famous in another connection by a former Harvard professor).

There is no provision for continuous and systematic statewide planning; and the numerous studies and reports of recent years are not an adequate substitute.

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*The opinions, conclusions and recommendations in this report are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the policy of the Academy for Educational Development.

There is little coordination of effort in the public sector and virtually none between the public and private sectors so that the policy in effect is for each institution to go its own way.

Policies for higher education in Massachusetts are changing almost from day to day under the twin spurs of dwindling sources of support and public criticism. (Among recent moves toward policy changes are the proposals for reorganization from the Office of the Secretary of Educational Affairs, the new leadership being offered by the Board of Higher Education, the proposal for an "Open University" by the Governor's Task Force, and the steps toward collaboration of public and private colleges and universities in creating an "equal opportunity pool" and a "decision-making forum").

State policy for higher education in Massachusetts as elsewhere renders certain courses of action attractive while placing obstacles to other courses of action by the legislature, government officials, coordinating and governing boards, and other agencies and persons engaged in or planning for higher education. Sometimes policy takes the form of absolute or virtual prohibition such as the Constitutional Amendment prohibiting the use of public money or property for aid to any institution "not publicly owned" and

controlled. In other cases policy takes the form of legislative authorization, supported by appropriations, to establish new public institutions or programs. Policy is also made through decisions on matters such as admissions or degree requirements in public institution. Prescribed procedures for obtaining grants or submitting budgets exert a direct or subtle influence on decisions to introduce experimental ventures or other innovations. The effects of State policy are related not only to the constraints imposed and the options favored; but also to the clarity - or lack of clarity - of intent, the mechanisms through which policy is interpreted and implemented, and the consistency of application.

Ambiguities in State Policy

It would be unreasonable to expect State policy for higher education to be articulated so clearly as to remove all ambiguities and inconsistencies. It may even be argued that in higher education, as in other broad areas of public policy, some degree of ambiguity promotes flexibility and gives adminstrators "elbow room" in dealing with changing conditions. Inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of policy, however, are a source of confusion which sometimes hinders appropriate responses to identified needs. In Massachusetts the proliferation of boards and other

agencies for planning, coordinating, and regulating higher education -- and the inadequacy of means to declared or presumed goals -- seems almost to suggest a design for confusion. As a consequence of the confusion it is difficult to obtain agreement on many important issues. Among the examples which may be cited are the following:

1. Although there is an apparent intent to put post-secondary education within reach of all Massachusetts residents, there is no clear explication of the means to be employed to gain this end. (For instance, how much dependence is to be placed on access through low tuition in public commuter colleges and how much on scholarships and other forms of student aid?)

2. There is verbal commitment to offering a wide range of educational opportunities through a diversity of public and private institutions; but no state policy has been enunciated for maintaining the vigor of the private sector or utilizing the resources of the private colleges and universities for the achievement of State goals and objectives.

3. Massachusetts has developed three distinct types of public institutions for higher education, with some differentiation and some overlap of functions; but has not gone far in clarifying bases for cooperation and coordination within the respective

divisions of State Colleges and Community Colleges, between these two divisions, or with the University of Massachusetts.

4. Appropriations to public colleges and universities are based on enrollments of full-time students; and admissions policies tend to favor those who pursue formal education from secondary school to higher levels on a continuous full-time basis; although there is a strong consensus regarding the importance of continuing education, concomitant with or alternated with work and career development.

5. Responsibilities for planning and coordination are divided among numerous boards and agencies without any clear plan for collaboration, and with inadequate provisions for funds and staff to perform the necessary functions.

Sources of Dissatisfaction

The Academy's study revealed widespread dissatisfaction (among legislators and government officials, educators and students, and citizens of diverse occupations) with many aspects of present policy for higher education in Massachusetts. Dissatisfaction often focuses on substantive matters such as: (1) the establishment for public institutions of low tuition charges regardless of ability to pay; (2) expansion of enrollments, physical facilities, and faculties

in the public sector, allegedly without regard to the possibility of providing equally appropriate programs or services at less cost through arrangements with private colleges and universities; (3)the inadequacy of provisions for scholarships and other student support; (4) the inappropriate location of a particular campus or the absence of public colleges in certain areas of high population density and meager educational resources; (5) over-emphasis on on-campus courses and activities at the expense of off-campus learning; (6) wasteful or poorly-planned capital expenditures; (7) ineffective teaching, poor faculty and space utilization, and general ineffectiveness of operations; or (8) the inappropriateness, ineffectiveness or downright uselessness of many programs and services.

Dissatisfaction is also expressed on grounds of ineffective or wasteful procedures. The processes of planning, data processing, budgeting, and communication of information all, are subjects of severe criticism -- as is the commissioning of numerous ad hoc studies which many persons believe are as likely to cause delay as to produce informed decisions. Criticism of procedures is accompanied by expressed or implied criticism of the agencies and persons believed responsible for procedural deficiencies. A frequent target -- even from its own members -- is the Board of Higher

Education which sometimes is chided for failure to exercise the powers given, but more often is seen as the victim of inadequate funding and staffing and lack of support by the Governor, the General Court, the segmental offices, and the several institutions. Other targets for frequent criticism are the boards and central offices of the State Colleges and the Community Colleges and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts -- in the last case chiefly for failure to provide a strong voice for the actual and potential contributions of the private sector to State goals for higher education. Some shortcoming were also identified in the leadership of State Executive Offices and the functioning of the General Court as the supreme policy maker for higher education in Massachusetts.

Mixed Effects

Evaluation of policies for finance, capital construction, institutional support, student support, etc., -- and of the organizations and processes through which the policies are formulated and implemented -- rests in the final analysis on the effects produced, or thought to be produced, on the institutions of higher education, the meeting of individual and social needs, and other goals or values deemed important. The formulation of recommendations for higher education policies in Massachusetts, or even

the posing of alternatives for the consideration of policymakers ideally should be grounded in a careful assay of the effects of present policies and of the ways in which they are formulated and applied. No comprehensive examination of the effects of policies for higher education has been attempted in this study; but an effort has been made to direct attention to aspects crucial to a fuller achievement of the purposes which the Commonwealth seeks to achieve through higher education. These purposes, as gathered from documents and public statements may be summarized under two broad goals:

1. To enable all Massachusetts residents whose development can be furthered through higher education to pursue programs suited to their needs and aspirations, and

2. To provide knowledge and educated personnel as required by a dynamic economy and other current and emerging needs of an adaptive society.

With reference to these goals and the objectives which may be inferred from them, it is pertinent to ask

A. How well are needs for post-secondary education being met?

B. How fully are the resources committed to higher education being utilized to achieve State goals and objectives?

C. What changes in policies or procedures would be likely to increase returns on the resources invested in higher education?

The data available do not permit full or unequivocal answers to these questions. It is possible, however, to draw certain inferences from the information gathered; and some of these inferences are summarized in the next several paragraphs.

II. With regard to how well needs are being met, the following rough generalizations seem tenable:

Meeting Individual Needs

1. Progress is being made in opening higher education to an increasing proportion of the population; and equality of access is being furthered through (a) open admission policies, (b) the establishment of additional community colleges, (c) the expansion of enrollments and offerings in public colleges and universities, (d) low tuition charges in state colleges and universities, (e) a relatively small state scholarship and loan program, and (f) through part-time and work-study programs and some instruction by television, cassettes

and other new technologies. Thus, barriers to access and utilization of higher education are being lowered gradually.

2. Impediments that keep many individuals from enjoying the full benefits of education remain in such forms as the following:

- o Financial barriers (made up of out-of-pocket costs and earnings foregone) operate against those in low-income brackets -- and students thrown on their own resources -- under the existing student aid programs, even in low tuition public colleges.

- o Educational deficiencies, resulting from poor early schooling or other deprivations, operate most strongly against those from low-income families and those growing up in areas providing few cultural advantages and little intellectual stimulation (which in Massachusetts, as in other states, include both metropolitan slum areas and areas of rural poverty and isolation).

- o Lack of appropriate programs constitutes a barrier to an undetermined number of individuals, including many able and creative persons, who wish to develop along lines different from those favored by academic traditions; and,

even though imaginative responses to these needs are beginning to appear in a few departments and schools of both private and public institutions, these opportunities are beyond the reach of many because of costs, location, admissions policies or other factors.

- o Ineffective instruction, resulting in part from failure to reward excellence in teaching and in part from slowness in making appropriate use of sophisticated instruction media and technologies to facilitate learning, causes many to "tune-out" and "turn-off".

- o Motivational barriers reduce the use made of higher education by those who are "turned off" by inability to relate college programs or degrees to expected or desired occupations and life styles; and the result may be not to seek admission, or to enter and drop out, or to remain as marginal users of the opportunities offered.

Contributions to Economic and Other Needs of Society

1. The colleges and universities of Massachusetts continue to make indispensable contributions to economic prosperity, to the functioning of government, to the advancement of science and tech-

nology, to the enjoyment and enhancement of cultural resources, and to making the State a pleasant habitation and a mecca for visitors. In Massachusetts particular importance attaches to the private colleges and universities which include some of the most renowned research and cultural centers in the world, as well as many others nationally recognized for excellence in scholarship, leadership and for notable contributions to the improvement of education. Despite some current skepticism regarding the value of formal education and the continuing expansion of higher education, no thoughtful person can fail to note how much the colleges and universities contribute to the general welfare in ways such as the following:

- o Continuing production of knowledge leads to technological advances which gives impetus to new industries (such as those on Route 128) and thus increases employment opportunities, payrolls, and taxable income.

- o Higher education as an economic enterprise ranks among the most important in the State because of the employment provided for highly qualified persons, the products in the form of knowledge and training which are exported all over the world, and the resources attracted from outside the State in such forms as research and training grants and contracts.

- The development of professional, managerial, and technical competencies are essential to the maintenance of Massachusetts' chief economic asset, namely the productivity of its manpower.

- The attraction of students, scholars, and other visitors from all parts of the world adds an important dimension to the tourist industry in Massachusetts.

- New residents are attracted not only because of employment opportunities opened through higher education, but also because of the proximity of educational institutions of the very first rank.

2. Certain gaps are apparent in the development of highly qualified manpower as evidenced by information provided elsewhere in this report regarding the employment of a considerable number of migrants to Massachusetts with higher levels of education than non-migrants. Many of these migrants, however, may have come to Massachusetts at least in part because of its reputation for excellence in higher education. There is a shortage of personnel with professional and specialized technical qualifications in many aspects of health care, social work, and technical production and services; while there is an oversupply in other fields such as elementary and

secondary school teaching. Adaptation to emerging manpower needs often is sluggish.

III. Tentative generalizations may also be made with respect to how effectively resources are being used in higher education:

1. The record of achievement of higher education, both nationally and in Massachusetts, is impressive in knowledge production and excellence of research, in the proportion of the population served, and in the diversity of programs and services offered. It is doubtful that any other enterprise of the 20th century has yielded higher returns to the supporting society than has higher education in the United States and in Massachusetts. Yet many hold that higher education has become stereotyped and unresponsive to new needs; and that its cost is excessive because of poor management and insufficient attention to ways of increasing productivity and efficiency. These are matters of serious import which deserve serious consideration by each institution and by all State policy-makers.

2. There are a number of indications that better provisions might be made for the use and conservation of the resources committed to higher education in Massachusetts; and several of these -- identified by educators, students, civic and political leaders -- are described briefly in the following comments:

- o Wasteful duplication of programs and services results from lack of planning and coordination between the public and private sectors and within both of these sectors, thus absorbing resources which might be used for more urgent needs.

- o Poor choice of locations for new institutions or services deprives some inner city areas of needed access to higher education and/or increases the expense of programs and services both to students and the State.

- o Tuition and scholarship policies subsidize some students from middle and upper income brackets while providing inadequate funds for those with meager financial resources.

- o Constitutional provisions and other constraints inhibit due consideration of possible economies and efficiencies to be gained by training grants, or other arrangements for services from private colleges and universities.

- o Other threats to the health, or even survival, of private and proprietary institutions of higher education -- including some of recognized excellence -- are posed by the rapid expansion of public facilities and services in ceratin areas, by actual or proposed tax levies, or by failure to encourage

the cooperative and complementary functioning of the private and public sectors.

IV. Changes in policies or procedures which hold promise for improving higher education performance are of several kinds:

1. Simplification of the structure for governance and clarification of the functions, jurisdiction, and powers of the several boards and other agencies hold possibilities for the improvement of both policy formulation and implementation. (Since a proposed plan of reorganization is now under consideration, it would be fruitless to elaborate this point).

2. The present provisions for data processing, statewide planning, coordination and budgeting, are not well calculated to promote constructive experimentation and innovation, cooperative effort, or optimum use of scarce resources. Ways in which these processes might be improved are suggested in the sections on planning and coordination.

3. Higher education, with a few notable exceptions, has been slow in breaking away from the traditional patterns of on-campus courses and advancement toward degrees and certification by credit hours validated by written examinations; and, although Massachusetts

has provided leadership for many constructive innovations. Examples are the cooperative and year-round programs at Northeastern, the Boston State College-Raytheon collaboration, and the off-campus programs of the University of Massachusetts School of Education. In addition, the community, for some time, has been operating in off-campus centers, offering continuing or adult education in a great diversity of fields ranging from traditional credit courses to "community service." Nevertheless, much more needs to be done to take education where people are and to adapt instruction to the life-long needs of adults through such means as the following:

- An examining university or comparable arrangement might be used to give "academic responsibility" to knowledge acquired outside of classrooms.
- Evaluation of performance might supplement or replace the time-bound units of academic credit if a concentrated effort can be made to solve the problems incident to evaluation of competence in life situations or approximations thereof.
- Preparation for multiple careers, which an increasing number of individuals may find either necessary or attractive, might be furthered by new patterns and locations for continuing education.
- Effectiveness and availability of instruction may be promoted through fuller use of sophisticated technologies of communi-

cation and instruction -- to offer carefully designed programs through CATV, computers, cassettes and other media -- and through the establishment of neighborhood learning centers where counseling and tutoring services can be combined with library and other resources provided through computer hook-ups, videotapes, and otherwise.

Objectives of State Policy

Implicit in the preceding generalizations regarding the effects of policies for higher education, and in the changes suggested, are a number of objectives derived from, or relevant to the two broad goals stated on page 8. The following listing of a few key objectives is offered for two reasons: (1) to reveal more clearly the aims which should guide policy for higher education in Massachusetts; and (2) to provide a vehicle for capsule summaries of the extent to which objectives are being achieved.

Objective 1: To enable every Massachusetts resident to obtain post-secondary education adapted to his or her personal, social, and career goals through such means as

a) providing a wide range of options in programs, modes of instruction, sites for instruction, scheduling (with regard to the time of life as well as the time of year and day), evaluation of

learning outcomes, etc.

b) removal of barriers to participation arising from financial costs, deficiencies in early education, place of residence, or other cause.

Appraisal: Progress is being made, but many who might profit from higher education are not reached effectively either because the available options are unappealing or because the present scholarship program and other aids to students are not sufficient to overcome barriers arising from low socio-economic status and related factors.

Objective 2: To provide Massachusetts with an adequate supply of persons with the essential proficiencies for the several professions, research and technical occupations, and other work for which higher education is a prerequisite.

Appraisal: Massachusetts colleges and universities, largely because of the outstanding private institutions, is second to none in the preparation of persons with superior qualifications for research, the professions, management, and posts of leadership generally. Nevertheless, shortages exist in medicine (including veterinary medicine) and other health-related services and in a number of other occupations requiring highly specialized skills. Perhaps, the most serious shortcoming is found in inadequate provision for continuing education for career advancement and the acquisition of competencies related

to technological changes.

Objective 3: To stimulate the discovery, refinement, and interpretation of knowledge for human enlightenmnet, advancement of science and technology, and other endeavors crucial to the State, the nation,and to human welfare throughout the world.
Appraisal: Because of Harvard, MIT, and other strong private research centers, Massachusetts yields to no state or nation in contributions to this objective; but there is some question as to whether present policies are well calculated to sustain this achievement.

Objective 4: To create conditions conducive to vigorous functioning and social responsiveness of a diversity of institutions of higher education, both public and private, so that they may address themselves severally and collectively to the achievement of objectives 1-3.
Appraisal: Policies for higher education in Massachusetts are not well designed with respect to impact on the private sector.

Objective 5: To promote coordination of effort and sharing of resources among the several private and public colleges and universities in order to increase effectiveness and more efficient use of resources.

Appraisal: Lack of suitable provisions for data analysis, planning, and communication contribute to poor achievement of this objective.

V. Planning for Higher Education

The inadequacy of provisions for continuous planning places serious obstacles in the path of orderly policy development for higher education in Massachusetts. Removing this deficiency requires choice among alternatives with regard to the amount and forms of centralized planning, the latitude for institutional planning, the planning responsibilities attached to various boards and offices, the extent of involvement in planning, means of communicating the outcomes of planning, and strategies for implementation of plans. The values which are to guide statewide planning for higher education need the most careful consideration; and the following assumptions are offered as a starting point:

1. The basic issue is the reconciliation of the values of institutional autonomy with those of coordination and accountability for the achievement of state goals and objectives.

2. The autonomy of institutions with respect to curriculum, instruction and research is essential to creativity, to

the development of strong faculties, and to flexibility in adapting to new demands and other new factors.

3. Other important issues focus on who is to be involved in planning and in what ways, how plans are to be disseminated, what provisions are made for evaluating and revising plans, what mechanisms and controls are used to encourage or obtain compliance with plans.

The essential foundation for planning is an adequate program of data collection and analysis. This requires the gathering of information of many sorts from many sources. Among other things it calls for a high degree of institutional cooperation in providing figures on enrollments, facilities, unit costs, goals and objectives, and many other elements. It requires also the gathering of information with regard to the current and anticipated needs for workers and the educational requirements for competent performance in the several occupations. Data must also be obtained on the present and probable impact of federal grants, legislation, and administrative procedures on the institutions of higher education, both public and private, in Massachusetts. All these kinds of information and a wide array of other data must be brought together so that analysis will reveal emerging and poorly met needs, duplication and excess capacity, poorly utilized resources, gaps in coordination of effort,

and measures likely to lead to improved achievement of goals.

Essentials of Planning

The information provided should be such as to:

1. Enable state budget makers and legislators to anticipate the requirements for capital investment and operating expenses and to identify changes needed in either institutional or student support;

2. Make it possible for institutions to take account of state needs and the programs of other institutions in clarifying their own goals and objectives and in establishing policies for recruitment and admission of students, faculty appointments and personnel policies, changes in curriculum offerings, and public services of various kinds;

3. Permit and encourage the pooling of resources -- between public and private and different types of institutions -- for the accomplishment of common purposes;

4. Encourage each institution to take full advantage of particular institutional strengths, and geographical and other factors, in order to develop special programs or unique services; and

5. Enable interested citizens to perceive the full array of services and opportunities provided by the higher educational institutions and to locate wasteful duplication, deficiencies in provisions, and anticipated needs.

Planning does not have to be directed toward the formulation of a master plan, a five-year plan, or other formal document; but statewide planning is a necessary prelude to, and accompaniment of, sound policy decisions and effective coordination of the diverse institutions and agencies of higher education. What is essential is that those making the key decisions become parties to, and beneficiaries of, a set of operations which lead to:

1. More and more precise specification of objectives and priorities among objectives as related to major goals;

2. Identification of resources and measures appropriate to the several objectives;

3. A continuing flow of information with respect to progress toward objectives, the adaptation of institutional plans to objectives, and other information that will inform the decisions constantly being made at various levels; and

4. Evaluation of the impact of policies and operations on the achievement of goals and objectives.

It is evident that the performance of these functions requires a higher capability for data collection and analysis than now exists in Massachusetts. What is needed is an agency with the authority and ability to elicit necessary information and to mine it for meaning with the aid of modern data processing facilities and seasoned judgments.

Statewide planning for higher education, therefore, must provide for (1) a continuing process of assessment of needs and operations, leading to revision of objectives and policies or reallocation of responsibilities and resources; and (2) communication of information essential to good decisions and productive action to all engaged in, affected by, or responsible for higher education in the Commonwealth. The crucial question is how such a process can be inaugurated and maintained at a high level of functioning. Suitable answers for Massachusetts can be found only through close consideration of a host of questions regarding the character of the planning agency; its location in the structure of higher education; its relationship to agencies of budgeting and management; its sources of financial support; the degree of

autonomy and authority accorded; and, last but not least, the staffing of the planning agency.

Consideration of Alternatives

There is no existing model of an ideal planning agency for higher education; and there is no single correct or best answer for any of the several questions which must be posed. In planning for planning as for other things, it is necessary to start with the existing situation and take careful bearings with respect to the desired direction of movement.

In Massachusetts at present there is no well defined allocation of responsibility for the planning of higher education; but there are several offices and boards which carry implicit -- or vaguely defined and limited -- responsibility for statewide planning. Among these are the Executive Office of Educational Affairs, the Massachusetts Advisory Council on Education, the Board of Higher Education and the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees and the President of the University of Massachusetts, the State College Board of Trustees and the Director, the Community College Board of Trustees and the Director. The consequance of a lack of clear definition of scope and authority for the several agencies has been fragmentation, overlapping, and serious deficiencies in information. The

advancement of higher education objectives under present provisions tends, therefore, to be piecemeal and partial -- falling far short of a comprehensive and systematic approach to the generation of sound bases for determining priorities, allocating resources, providing incentives for responsiveness to identified needs, or co-ordinating efforts to the desired ends.

Better provisions for planning are urgent if Massachusetts is to capitalize on its rich diversity of private and public institutions of higher education and move toward more effective use of these resources for the satisfaction of individual and social needs. Since neither the present nor proposed organization deals explicitly with planning functions, numerous alternatives appear theoretically open. For example, a planning agency might be set up (1) as an adjunct to the Office of Secretary of Educational Affairs; (2) under some existing or proposed board or council such as the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education or the proposed Board of Post-secondary Education; or (3) under a Council or Commission created for the express purpose of establishing and maintaining an effective agency for data analysis and planning related to achieving the Commonwealth's goals for, and through, higher education. No attempt is made here to argue the respective merits of these alternatives since organization is not within the purview of this study. Certain criteria are suggested,

however, as relevant to effective performance of the planning function, regardless of where it is located in the governance of higher education.

Criteria to be Met

Among the more important criteria to be met, if planning is to lead to fruitful decisions and actions -- by the body politic, the several institutions, educational personnel, and others affected -- are the following:

1. The planning agency must be -- and must be perceived to be -- free of any entangling alliances (political, institutional or otherwise).

2. The agency must win the confidence and full cooperation of public officials, business and labor leaders, and of both public and private instituions of higher education, in order to gain access to information necessary for an accurate portrayal of the functioning of higher education and the effects of state policies.

3. The operations of the agency should be completely open so that all concerned may have a basis for judging the adequacy of the processes for data gathering, analysis, and dissemination.

4. All information gathered by the agency, and the interpretations thereof, should be readily accessible to the Executive Offices, the General Court, the several boards of trustees, the administrators and staffs of all educational institutions and organization (both public and private), and to other interested parties (including students and other citizens).

5. The agency should have a staff fully conversant with advanced concepts and technologies of planning, data processing, evaluation, and accountability; and -- even more important -- a staff knowledgeable about higher education and fully sensitive to the cautions to be observed when applying to higher education techniques and concepts developed for other enterprises.

6. The agency should have sufficient autonomy to perform objectively, and without fear of reprisals, its essential functions of clarifying goals and assessing needs for higher education; defining objectives and evaluating the effects of State policies and of institutional operations on the achievement of objectives; and providing all who make decisions for higher education with reliable esti-

mates of the comparative cost effectiveness (or advantages and disadvantages) of viable policy alternatives.

7. The statewide planning agency must maintain active two-way communication with the planners and governing boards of the several public and private colleges and universities; with state budget makers and legislative committees; with any regional boards and offices which may be established; with the National Institute of Education, the Higher Education Foundation, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the National Science Foundation, and other U. S. agencies whose activities impinge upon -- or provide inputs to -- higher education.

8. The funding of the planning agency for higher education must be such as to encourage (a) the development of a staff of highly qualified analysts; (b) the initiation and continuance of studies requiring three years or more for completion; (c) the use of sophisticated computer facilities for data analysis; (d) the establishment of effective channels for the gathering of data, evaluation of operations, and widespread communication of findings.

In meeting these criteria, choices may be made among numerous alternatives with respect to such matters as: (1) responsibility for preparation and recommendation of the budget for planning, (2) approval of staffing patterns and appointments, (3) determination of priorities with regard to activities, (4) and evaluation of performance of the planning agency and of the relationship established with other agencies of higher education. These and related responsibilities may be (1) distributed among several offices or boards, or (2) allocated to a single office or board. The interrelationships of the several functions would seem to suggest the second alternative as most conducive to the integrity and effectiveness of the planning agency unless there exist strong reasons, not revealed by this study, to set up "checks and balances" through division of responsibility. If the second alternative is chosen, further options exist with respect to whether the functions are to be allocated to (1) the Executive Office of Educational Affairs, (2) a board such as the proposed Board of Post-secondary Education, or to (3) a council such as the Massachusetts Advisory Council on Education or the proposed Massachusetts Education Council.

It may be argued that the criteria are most likely to be satisfied by a lay board representative of the various concerns for education; but alternatives still remain with regard to member-

ship, method of appointment, and definition of duties and powers. Recommendations regarding agencies for planning and coordination will be offered later in this report.

Planning is based on data collection and analysis but moves beyond mere data processing in important ways, such as:

1. Careful evaluation of the effects of various factors and combinations of factors on such matters as (a) access to and participation in higher education by persons from different socio-economic levels and career aspirations; (b) the development of skills and professional capabilities required for a healthy economy and for other social needs; and (c) the production and transmission of knowledge.

2. Identification of alternative means of achieving goals and objectives, with close analysis of the probable gains and losses (or cost effectiveness) which may be anticipated from the choice of given alternatives.

3. Provision of broadened bases for decision-making: (a) by drawing imaginative ideas and models, as well as factual data, from many sources (including students, com-

munity leaders and others involved in or concerned for the quality, accessibility, or appropriateness of higher education programs); and, (b) by interpreting and communicating findings so that their meanings are clear to concerned laymen as well as to those professionally engaged in higher education.

As data analysis is the foundation of planning, the latter is an indispensable prelude to coordination.

VI. Provisions for Coordination

In the course of the study, one of the most frequent comments encountered was regarding the lack of coordination among the various offices, boards, and institutions engaged in planning for and providing higher education in Massachusetts. These comments are supported by other evidences of poor communication and lack of coordinated effort among the several types of public colleges and universities and between public and private institutions. No board or other agency has been given a clear mandate for promoting cooperation among the several offices and institutions or the control of means appropriate to coordination. Recent controversies between public and private institutions, indications of failure to consider fuller use of existing resources and facilities before

developing new ones, and examples of problems susceptible of solution through closer cooperation: all point to an imperative need for better coordination of higher education in Massachusetts.

Instrumentalities of Coordination

Among the salient means of promoting coordination between the public and private sectors, the various levels of education, and the several institutions are the following:

1. Involvement of representatives of the various sectors, offices, and both public and private institutions in identification of needs, the setting of goals and objectives, and other aspects of planning;

2. Effective communication of information (on needs, resources, programs, services, plans for the future, and other matters) to enable decisions to be made with awareness of the activities of other institutions and groups;

3. Use of financial or other incentives to, and rewards for, coordinated activities and programs; and

4. Employment of administrative, budgetary, or statutory controls to induce coordination.

It is obvious that these are not mutually exclusive alternatives; and an effective approach to coordination doubtless will require some admixture in appropriate proportions of most or all of these measures. In the belief that voluntary cooperation on a basis of shared objectives and information is preferable to and usually more effective than enforced cooperation, the approach to closer coordination should combine:

1. Primary emphasis on representative involvement in planning, and effective communication of information; with

2. Secondary emphasis on use of incentives to coordination of programs, activities, and facilities; and

3. A sparing use of administrative, budgetary, and statutory controls on matters least likely to threaten institutional autonomy.

To repeat, planning is, or ought to be a primary instrument of coordination through (1) involvement in the planning processes of representatives of the institutions whose activities are to be coordinated; and (2) effective communication of information to all who are making decisions in higher education. To assure quick and effective cooperation in the sharing of facilities and in elimina-

ting costly duplication, it may be necessary to offer incentives for the pooling of resources and for replacing identical or similar offerings with complementary programs. The incentives may take several forms, such as:

1. Grants for the development of experimental programs or services through collaboration of two or more institutions and/or other community agencies in response to needs (a) revealed by state or regional planning agencies, or (b) identified in other ways;

2. Contracts with consortia of institutions to expand services or increase enrollments in designated areas of postsecondary education;

3. Favorable treatment of budgetary requests which give assurance of economies or improved service through interinstitutional cooperation;

4. Training grants or contracts for the performance of functions or services identified by statewide or regional planning as responsive to high priority needs.

Budgeting as an Instrument of Coordination

While planning should furnish the basis for cooperation by

highlighting objectives and revealing possibilities for coordinated programs and services, the process of budgeting offers opportunities to foster coordination and nudge plans into operation. Careful provision needs to be made, therefore, for a series of successive steps leading from (1) the formulation of guidelines and their approval by a state board or council for higher education; through (2) institution by institution and level by level (or region by region) preparation of proposals and estimates; for (3) submission to the Executive Office of the Secretary for Educational Affairs or other appropriate office as basis for formulation of a unified budget; and, (4) back to the statewide board or council for revision; and, (5) submission to State budgetary authorities. The budgetary process will, of course, depend somewhat on the structure for the governance of higher education and the scope of authority of the several offices and boards; and budgeting for higher education, as for other purposes, must recognize the overall budgetary responsibilities of the Governor and the General Court.

Budgeting is a powerful instrument of coordination both positively, through incentives for cooperation; and negatively, through withholding or reducing state funds where lack of cooperation may lead to ineffectiveness or poor utilization of resources. Administrative leadership by statewide or regional officers may make it

unnecessary to use budget cut-offs or other negative measures except in rare cases. Statutory controls tend to be inflexible and represent a last resort when other measures fail. The necessity for instituting rigid controls is in itself an acknowledgement of a breakdown of the normal processes of planning, budgeting, and leadership.

Objects of Coordination

The objects sought through coordination, the nature of the activities to be coordinated, and the character of the institutions to be involved, must be kept in mind in choosing the appropriate means to be employed. Among the objects to be sought through closer coordination of programs and services, between private and public institutions and among the several types of colleges and universities, are the following:

1. To get the highest possible returns on the investment in higher education in the forms of (a) high quality instruction and services and (b) adaptation of programs and services to encompass new or poorly met needs;

2. To help each institution to conserve its resources by concentrating on those functions which it is best qualified to perform or for which other adequate provisions

are lacking;

3. To improve services to students without excessive costs to them or to the State by encouraging arrangements for the sharing of special facilities and services such as libraries, computer facilities, communications media and technoloby, highly specialized laboratories and shops, specialized faculty capabilities, etc.;

4. To maintain and increase the rich diversity of educational opportunity and the economic and social assets represented by the great private universities and the many excellent specialized colleges;

5. To blend the contributions of the several private institutions with those of the University of Massachusetts, the State Colleges, and the Community Colleges in such a way as to further effective advancement of the Commonwealth's goals of optimum development of its citizens as individuals and continuing infusion of new knowledge and developed talents into the arts and sciences, the economy, and public affairs.

The means of achieving these objectives must be such as to preserve whatever is deemed essential in the distinction between

the private and public sector, and among the several types of institutions. This requires not only a decent regard for institutional autonomy, but also the avoidance of funding and regulatory policies which make loss of independence and uniqueness the price of survival. Coordination is a two-edged weapon to be used selectively so as to enhance rather than diminish constructive competition and peaks of excellence.